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ABSTRACT

Suggestions are offered for making business and financial affairs of educational institutions more personal and accountable to faculty, students, administrators, and the community. Objectives are identified for business managers to: (1) devise more ways for student, staff, and faculty participation in shaping the college culture and managing the organization; (2) provide better evaluation and accountability of efforts; (3) keep the institution relevant to the society that supports it; and (4) devise a built-in reward system for employees. Efforts of Central Washington State College in these areas are described. Internal programs initiated include a departmental evaluation between business and academic staff, an intern program for students, and the use of time productivity logs to help individuals become accountable and more effective in time management. It is concluded that business officers are in the most strategic place to help the institution become positive, constructive, and helpful. (LBH)

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"We can improve our models for working with people."

HUMANIZING BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

By Stanford R. Bohne

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THERE WAS A TIME when we who work on the business side of college management were concerned only with managing money, equipment and supplies. Our successes were measured in terms of how well we satisfied these institutional needs. Unfortunately, in our single-minded devotion to these ends, we have been accused of running our organizations with more concern for machines and budgets than for people—and we have a real need to develop a new image in the 70's. Whether we like it or not, our experiences with the academic community in the 60's are showing us to be woefully inadequate in meeting human needs. Unless the institutional management can better accommodate the needs and satisfy the interests of all participants, especially those regular participants such as faculty, students, and administrators, higher education may not be able to survive.

All organizations have two things in common: an institutional purpose—to make money, for example, or to heal the sick, or educate the people; and a concomitant purpose—to satisfy the human needs of those in the organization. These two goals are inseparable. Performance and production are directly affected by the degree to which human needs are satisfied. Moreover, performing well is one of our human needs. Our current dilemma on the college campus is caused by the noncongruence between the needs of the students, staff, and faculty on the one hand, and the perceived objectives and procedures of the institution on the other.

Man's Basic Needs

The behavioral scientists tell us that man is constantly searching for adequacy. They tell us also that men seek this adequacy by identifying with others who have needs similar to theirs. This identification results in the formation of informal groups and organizations, as well as formal ones. Such organizations develop systems to increase the likelihood of meeting their needs. Families are, in a real sense, an organization and an institution. The church is an organization, of people with common and identifiable needs. Our work organizations, including colleges and universities, must also provide rewarding relationships for the people who work in them because doing so is, again, one of the two main reasons for their existence.

When an organization satisfies men's needs, certain things characterize the membership: they develop loyalty and support for the organization; they adopt its standards; they defend its systems; and they help it to grow and become better.

Most of us are familiar with Charlie Brown's baseball team. Perhaps you recall the sequence in which Linus is playing in the outfield and says, "I don't mind playing right field. I don't mind standing out here in weeds over my head—really I don't. I mean, if this is where I can do the team the *most good*, this is where I belong. The only thing that bothers me is, I don't know if I'm facing the right way."

Here is an example of the loyalty and support we are talking about. But how long will it last without direction? How long will it last if the organization does not help him in his search for adequacy? He must somehow know that he's helping the team. Our team—his team.

The Situation Today

In the past several years, I have failed to see either the students or the faculty supporting the institution very vigorously. Have they been left standing out in right field? If they have, their tendency is to be much more critical and untrusting. When the organization does not meet human needs, there will be much complaining, withdrawal from the organization, apathy, frustration, hostility. In severe cases, there will be attacks on the organization itself and attempts to tear it down. It would be nice if the history of unrest on college campuses could show that the unrest was isolated and restricted to radical groups, but the prevailing accounts of campus unrest show that there has been much dissatisfaction and distrust among the rank and file. The credibility gaps among the students and the administration and faculty seem to be ever present

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and continue to grow wider on the campus (if not deeper) even though student riots have subsided.

From off-campus we are also getting continuous demands to become more accountable about how we are spending money and how we propose to spend it—how we justify requests. This requires that we join with students, faculty, board members and citizen support groups to think through more carefully what the institution is, what it is trying to become, and how it can once again assume its rightful place of leadership and regain the confidence of those supporters it needs so badly.

The Challenge to Business Managers

Your problem and mine, as people in charge of business affairs, is to develop some strategies to help close these gaps, both on and off the campus. We must:

- Devise more ways for students, staff and professors to participate in shaping the college culture and manage the organization.
- Provide for better *evaluation* and *accountability* of our efforts.
- Keep the institution *relevant* to the society which supports it.
- Devise a built-in *reward* system for employees—more "on job" rewards, intrinsic rewards.

There are too many things to say about these four strategies to get them all said in this short article. Increased participation, greater accountability, intrinsic rewards, relevance—these are big, complex topics, all of which are being much discussed today. I would like, though, to develop one important component of all four of them: a greater concern for the people we work for and with. All four strategies are aimed at bringing greater satisfaction to the individual.

What We Did

Early in 1971, we in Business and Financial Affairs at Central Washington State College began to ask ourselves some basic questions. Were we as productive as we could be? Were we efficient in our operations? Did each one of us feel accountable for his actions, and were we responsive enough to the needs of the campus? Were we facing the right way and really helping the team?

We recognized that we had shortcomings in these and other areas, and that we had some problems in our relationships with each other. We took a first step toward solving these problems by calling upon an organizational consultant on our campus with a background in behavioral sciences. We thought of our work in organizational development not as a structure change, but as a change in climate—attitudes, values, trust, behavior and accountability. We wanted to work for a much greater involvement and deeper commitment.

In working with our consultant we learned what was really meant by organizational growth and development. The words took on new meaning. We learned to view our organization as a complex system with many subsystems that affect each other, all of which have to be healthy for the organization to function optimally. We learned this from the data we generated as we *described ourselves to ourselves*. Our consultant called it diagnosis—the first organizational development step. We learned that because organizations are made up of people, organizational growth means that people must grow; for it to change, people must change. We also learned that change could be threatening as well as exciting and challenging. What helped us most in the initial going was the realization that the changes we sought could be *planned*. We, with our consultant, could be the architects of the change rather than the victims, and that realization lessened the threat. We came to appreciate how important it was to gather and use data to help in the planning.

Survey and Programs

We first met to try to work out some solutions to our problems in May, 1971. Our objectives in this seminar were to: create an openness with each other; increase our skill in becoming more helpful to each other; create an atmosphere of *trust* within and throughout Business Affairs; improve our image with the rest of the campus by developing ideas on how to more accurately portray Business Affairs functions to the rest of the campus; develop a better understanding of each department head's role in Business Affairs; develop a team relationship; increase our productivity through time management techniques; better understand each other as human beings; and develop a decision-making model that would allow the people who would be affected to participate in decisions. Needless to say, we soon came to realize that our initial efforts were a bit ambitious, and that more modest objectives were necessary. We made good headway on many of these objectives in the year that followed. The most satisfying, though, was the accomplishment of trust and teamwork. Attaining some success with these two goals made all the time and effort spent worthwhile for everyone.

As a means to better understand each other and to find out how we could work better together, we conducted a survey asking the question, "What motivates me? (Under what conditions can I do my best work?)" Twenty-three choices were offered. The items chosen most often were: feeling my job is important; good pay; respect for me as a person; and opportunity to do interesting work. In light of these responses, we have taken steps to meet these needs and make employees feel better about their work.

Improving our image with the rest of the campus came in for a great deal of discussion and concern. The net result was the development of some new attitudes, and some action programs:

• We became more proactive and less reactive. We told people through news releases, handbills, etc., of things we were doing that would affect them, and asked for their cooperation. We sought feedback from the whole campus rather than a select few. Because of our building program, areas of our campus were continually under construction. Walkways and driveways were changed almost weekly. We learned that such changes in the physical environment caused people to be sensitive and reactive. Our physical plant director, by a simple informational system, did most to smooth ruffled feathers when he developed a bulletin technique which was used on all construction projects. The bulletin told people what was being done, why it was being done, and when it would be finished.

• We established a schedule for Business Affairs administrators to visit with other employees on the campus. The Business Manager and Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs visited with nearly all campus employees including the night custodians, who gave us some of our best ideas for improving some of our operations. We were trying to make Business Affairs administrators more visible and more approachable.

• A faculty member was assigned to the Business Affairs Council, to be the voice of the faculty on items that affect the faculty.

• A senior student from Economics and Business Administration was added to the staff to provide an important link between the student body and Business Affairs. This employee has been given free access to the information in the business office, and students now feel much better informed. This has effectively removed any basis of distrust, and has encouraged cooperation.

Internal Programs

We have also implemented several internal programs that we have found very beneficial. One is a departmental evaluation by Business Affairs staff and outside departments of each Business Affairs office. We have done this for Administrative Data Processing and Staff Personnel. It gives each of us a better perspective. We set objectives at the end of each evaluation seminar for improving our service. Another helpful program is an intern program for students in the Department of Economics and Business Administration to participate in Business Affairs problem solving. We have been able to develop many very good projects that would have taken a longer time for implementation without the relief these interns have given our regular staff from the workload and time constraints placed on them.

An exercise we found helpful is to have employees answer two questions. The first: "If you had a brilliant idea, one you really thought had a lot of merit, to whom would you take it?" The second: "If you had a real problem, a confidential one, to whom would you take it?" These two questions will furnish you with indices about the level of trust in your organization, the levels of confidence and the degree to which ideas are nurtured, or discouraged.

We have benefited a lot from using time productivity logs. These give us an opportunity to help each individual become accountable and more effective in time management, at the same time improve his productivity and satisfaction with his work. As a result of what we learned from these logs, we implemented the following time schedule:

8:00 - 10:00 A.M.:	No phone calls. Time spent working on projects and answering letters.
10:00 - 12:00 A.M.:	Return calls that came in during the first two hours. Open-door office hours.
1:00 - 5:00 P.M.:	Meetings, campus visitations, etc.

We found that this schedule allowed us all to complete many projects that had been gathering dust.

Some other improvement projects that we have been working on but which have not been fully developed so far are: a departmental communications program to link the Business Office with the faculty through the departmental chairmen; a performance evaluation for middle managers; and periodic classroom assignments for Business Affairs department heads.

A Strategic Position

Business officers are in perhaps *the most strategic place* to help the institution become positive instead of negative, constructive instead of destructive, helpful rather than hurtful. I don't mean that business managers should feel and act is if they are riding the white horse out in front of the parade. Those who act this way are only feeding their own egos. But, for example, when implementing a policy in a business area that affects the academic areas, why not consult with the Academic Vice President or Dean and secure his signature on the memorandum with yours?

One of the things we can do as business officers, because our influence is so broad, is to improve our own models for working with people. We all have different life styles, whether we realize it or not. Each of us hears a different drummer. But one thing seems unmistakably clear: we had better learn to listen more closely to the drums of students, faculty and our citizen supporters. The only evidence they accept as proof we hear them is that we have time for them. It is clear that we are going to be given no additional money, which means no personnel increases, which means no more assistance, and therefore no more available time—we are going to have to create this time by becoming better managers of our own and our people's time.

And when I speak about the need for having more time

to listen to people, I do not mean just other people. I mean time for yourself, too—time for meditation, time to reflect, to introspect. When you neglect to make time for this, the inevitable result is a feeling of having lost control, of being on a treadmill, hurrying just to keep up with things. Several unintended messages can be transmitted by this hurrying, one of them being that the other person isn't worth listening to, and I don't need to tell you how damaging such a message can be to your relationship with that person.

We all think that we spend much time with people, and this is probably true. But there is a difference between *spending* time *with* people and *having* time *for* people. The message that you don't really have the time for a person comes from shuffling papers while he is trying to talk to you or allowing your telephone to interrupt his train of thought, or creating a barrier between you by sitting behind your desk rather than coming around on his side. And why not meet a visitor at the door to welcome him, and then walk him to the door when the conversation is over? He will feel more like returning to help you later on.

Many of us find it hard to remember our original humanity after being beaten down by the various pressures from students, faculty, central office dictates, and the legislature—but we must remember it.

The task-oriented manager of yesterday is outdated. The manager of today and tomorrow has got to learn to be more people-oriented. For surely we do not want our epitaph to read: "Born a human being, died a business manager." Nor do we want the epitaph for our college to read: "Born a school for people, died an institution."

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